

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Final Office Action dated March 12, 2004, having a shortened statutory period set to expire June 12, 2004. Claims 1-4, 6, 8, 9, 13-15, 18-21 and 25 are pending. Applicants have canceled Claims 1-4, 6 and 8. No new matter has been entered by these amendments. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter the proposed cancellation of claims, as such cancellation either places the present application in condition for allowance or reduces issues on appeal, and therefore such amendment is proper.

IN THE CLAIMS

- 1-8. (canceled)
9. (previously presented) An apparatus, comprising:
a body having an axis of rotation;
a serial number laser etched on the body, the serial number appearing on the body in a symmetrically arcuate array about the axis in both human-readable and machine readable forms, the serial number having a plurality of order characters and a plurality of unique characters;
a plurality of two-dimensional array codes on the body, each encoding a portion of the serial number such that the entire serial number is encoded on the body; wherein
a first one of the array codes encodes a first one of the order characters, a second one of the array codes encodes a second one of the order characters, a third one of the array codes encodes a third one of the order characters, and the unique characters are sequentially divided among and encoded by the array codes following said ones of the order characters; and wherein
the human-readable form of the serial number appears in a first order, and the machine-readable form of the serial number appears in an order different from the first order.
- 10-12. (canceled)
13. (original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein each of the array codes comprises a 10x10 array of cells.
14. (original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the serial number has three order characters and six unique characters, and wherein there are three array codes on the body, each encoding three, nonsequential characters of the serial number.
15. (previously presented) A method for encoding the serial number of an apparatus, the serial number having a plurality of order characters and a plurality of unique characters, the method comprising:
(a) providing the apparatus with two versions of the serial number: a plurality of separate, machine-readable codes, and a single human-readable code;

(b) encoding one of the order characters of the serial number with each of the machine-readable codes;

(c) dividing and encoding the unique characters of the serial number among the codes following the order characters encoded in step (b), such that an order of the serial number in the machine-readable codes differs from an order of the serial number in the human-readable code; and then

reading the machine-readable codes with a machine code reader and reconstructing the machine-read serial number in the same order as the human-read code.

16-17. (canceled)

18. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein steps (b) and (c) comprise independently and sequentially dividing the order characters and the unique characters among the codes.

19. (original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of laser etching the codes on the apparatus.

20. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein step (a) comprises providing three codes on the apparatus, each encoding three, nonsequential characters of the serial number.

21. (previously presented) A method for encoding the serial number of an apparatus, the serial number having a plurality of order characters and a plurality of unique characters, the method comprising:

(a) providing the apparatus with a plurality of laser etched, machine-readable, two-dimensional array codes, the array codes being symmetrically positioned about a rotational axis of the apparatus such that the array codes are oriented in an arcuate pattern about the axis;

(b) sequentially encoding one of the order characters of the serial number with each of the array codes;

(c) sequentially dividing and encoding the unique characters of the serial number among the array codes following the order characters encoded in step (b);

(d) forming the serial number on the apparatus in a human-readable code that differs in order from an order of the machine-readable array codes; and then

(e) reading the array codes with a machine code reader and reconstructing the machine-read serial number in the same order as the order of the human-readable code.

22-24. (canceled)

25. (original) The method of claim 21 wherein step (a) comprises providing three codes on the apparatus, each encoding three, nonsequential characters of the serial number.